

KAKAMAS INTEREST GROUP/BELANGEGROEP

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For immediate release

KAKAMAS RESIDENTS CALL FOR REMOVAL OF MAYOR AND TECHNICAL DIRECTOR AMIDST WATER SUPPLY CRISIS

Kakamas, Northern Cape: After months of unreliable water supply and allegations that water is not safe to consume, community leaders have started a petition to remove the technical director and the executive mayor of the Kai !Garib Local Municipality.

This after criminal charges of trespassing were brought against three members of a local interest association, the Kakamas Interest Group (Kakamas Belangegroep), who started repairing the water infrastructure at their own cost out of desperation to restore water supply to the area. The Association was founded to hold the Kai !Garib Local Municipality accountable for service delivery.

These developments are the latest in a perceived municipal water supply crisis of roughly three years resulting in seven allegedly related deaths in the area in 2023.

The Association says it is extremely concerned about the local government's ongoing failure to provide clean and safe water to residents in Kakamas.

According to Jaco Visser, spokesperson of the Kakamas Interest Group, the Association is aware of a report issued by the Northern Cape health department's chief environmental health practitioner, Mr E Jansen, sent to district-level health officials, the Kakamas Hospital and other health practitioners on 10 December 2025.

In the report Mr Jansen allegedly states: "With the recent water sampling that was done in order to monitor the quality of the water in the Kai Garieb [sic] area the results indicate that the water is of poor quality and not safe for drinking purposes. This could be possibly due to a prolonged challenge to treat the water and also the rising water levels of the Orange River. This may result in an increase of diarrheal cases at health facilities."

Visser says the Association is also very concerned about the maintenance failure of the Kakamas-*waterwerke* ("water works").

"The plant is seriously damaged and not functioning at its optimal design capacity," he says.

According to Visser the Association mobilised individual funding from inhabitants and local businesses the week of 5 January to buy materials and pay for labour to fix the sediment tanks at the water works.

Work to fix the sediment tanks started late in the week with the participation of technicians of the municipality.

Visser adds that, on 14 January, the Association member overseeing its efforts on-site with the municipality's technician, received a call from Mario Links, technical director of the Kai !Garib municipality, threatening said member with arrest.

Residents allege Links then arrived at the water works with police members, asking for a meeting at his office.

According to Visser, the impression at said meeting between the Association and Links at the municipal offices, was that the municipality is more concerned about the coming local elections and the perception that the municipality is not doing its work, than to focus on ensuring clean, safe and reliable potable water to the residents and businesses of Kakamas.

On 14 January, the association received a letter from the municipal manager, Obakeng Isaacs, authorising the association's member to continue repair work on the water treatment plant.

Despite this, later that evening, the association was ordered by Isaacs to stop repairing the water works.

Says Visser, "It is alleged that some of Kai !Garib's councillors are worried about the optics of the association repairing the water works ahead of the local elections later this year. It is alleged that the failure of the municipality to fix the water works make the councillors look bad in the eyes of potential voters."

Visser confirmed charges of trespassing was brought against three of the Association members who attempted to repair water infrastructure.

As a next step the Association has started a petition to remove the technical director and the executive mayor, Marshall Matthys, of the Kai !Garib Local Municipality.

*****The Kakamas Interest Group, a member-driven organisation, was founded in November 2017 with its primary aim of holding the local municipality accountable to its Constitutional and legal obligations towards its citizens and to act in the best interest of all inhabitants of the Kai !Garib Local Municipality.*****

-ENDS-

To sign the petition, visit: <https://forms.gle/feiw88hkfMYnPEDT6>

For assistance with press enquiries, kindly contact:

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